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BIBLE STUDY IN THE COLLEGES OF NEW
ENGLAND.By Rev. SILAS P. COOK,
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The aim of this paper is to show, in the present arrangements for Bible Study in New England colleges, the crest of the advancing wave of interest in academic Bible study, which is not confined to New England indeed, but which may here be more easily traced. We are glad, however, to note that Professor Burroughs of Amherst College, as the secretary of the American Institute of Sacred Literature, is preparing a full collection of facts regarding Bible study, Hebrew, Greek and English, in the schools and colleges of the United States and the Canadas, a work requiring considerable time, but which is to be given to the public, it is hoped, as soon as it is completed. We find, in our New England colleges, numerous Bible classes held on Sunday and on week nights, mainly for devotional study, and conducted by members of the faculty. There are also frequent instances of the occasional substitution of the Greek New Testament in the class room, in the place of the usual classic author; and, in the departments of history and ethics, the courses of study find natural points of contact with the Bible; numerous classes also are organized for the study of the Bible, with special reference to Christian work, in the College Young Men's Christian Associations; there are also occasional special lectures upon Bible topics; but our present inquiry is not so much with reference to these, but aims rather to ascertain how far the Bible is coming to be the basis of direct and systematic study with the methods and requirements which belong to other departments of learning.

In this sense, Middlebury and Tufts colleges have no courses of systematic Bible study. Bates College, the University of Vermont, Colby, Boston, Wesleyan, and Brown

Universities, while not as yet offering such courses, have the matter now under advisement, with the hope of introducing it at an early date.

In Boston University recent lectures on the Literary Study of the Bible by Mr. R. G. Moulton, of Cambridge, England, have awakened much interest. In an expression of appreciation voted by the audience it was said, "He has led us as a prophet of the coming time, when the Bible shall be a branch of study in all our colleges, and when all culture, and all literature shall acknowledge the Bible as the world's chief book."

Wesleyan University gives for the Junior class electives in Hebrew, and New Testament Greek, and mentions a demand on the part of the students for an elective in the Bible, which, it is hoped, will soon be met.

Brown University hopes soon to introduce courses of study in Bible Literature similar to those in Amherst College under Professor Burroughs, and in Yale University under Professor Harper.

Professor G. Stanley Hall, of Clark University, Worcester, which is just entering its second year, expresses special present interest in the movement towards Bible study. He reports with regret that, as yet, a place has not been found for it in the courses of higher studies and original investigations, to which the University is especially devoted.

Two Colleges,—Dartmouth, and Trinity, have required courses of Bible study, continuous, and systematic, to which are given the first recitations of Monday mornings throughout the course. In Dartmouth this system of Bible study dates perhaps from the foundation of the college, and probably has not been intermitted. Six years ago it was arranged so as to give for the Freshmen, Historic Origin of the Scriptures; Sophomores, Life of Christ; Juniors, the Development of the Church in connection with the Life of Paul; Seniors, Early History from Genesis to Joshua. The president adds that during ten or twelve years he has not known a young man to graduate an avowed sceptic. He notes that the chief difficulty in the study is to find text books suited for college classes.

Trinity College has just added to a Monday morning reci-

tation, required throughout the course, an enlarged elective in Hebrew for the junior and senior years.

Five colleges have courses of various scope and completeness, which seem especially to illustrate the more recent movement in Bible study.

Bowdoin College gives four hours a week, in the third term of the freshman year, to required recitations in the Gospel of Mark in Greek. There is also a four hours' elective in the second and third terms of the senior year in the Gospels, and the Life of Christ, also in the Epistles of Paul, and, in the Old Testament, the Psalms and selected passages.

Williams College has electives in Biblical Literature, four hours each week, in the second and third terms of the senior year. Hebrew is also given as an elective throughout the year. President Carter adds, "I wish we had a professor who should teach nothing else than the Bible. I would have a two years' course. I hope still to have the money for such a course, when the Church wakes up to the appalling secular tendencies of the age." In Williams College there are also several voluntary classes in Bible study arranged as if to supplement, in a measure, the limited courses which are pursued systematically as a part of college work.

Harvard College does not offer either a prescribed course, or a systematized elective course. But all the studies in the Divinity School are open to undergraduates, and if taken are counted as electives, so that a student can make a large part of his academic studies centre around the Bible. The board of preachers offered the students for the present year their choice of a new elective in Bible study or an evening voluntary class. The students most interested chose the latter, and the lectures are now in progress, attended by large numbers, with marks of decided interest. My correspondent adds, "It is the earnest purpose of those who have this Bible study in hand, to quicken through its instrumentality the Christian spirit of the Colleges." And, "The University, I am sure, will meet any demand which the students may make for Bible study."

Amherst College enjoys what several other colleges desire and hope to attain,—a professorship devoted wholly to the

development of Bible study. Professor Burroughs describes the work of his department as follows: "Biblical Literature is offered as a four hour elective to the two upper classes. About one-fourth of the class elect it; many who are not professing Christians are among this number. The courses are conducted from the points of view of history and literature. The method employed is the inductive. With the Seniors, the so-called 'German Seminary' method is quite strictly followed; and with the Juniors it is approximated to as nearly as possible. The requirements are severe, some students putting twelve to fifteen hours weekly upon the subject. The Juniors study Old Testament prophecy, and the New Testament epistles (selected books); the Seniors spend their time upon the critical study of the Gospels. In supplementary lectures the remainder of the Biblical Books are passed over, the Old Testament Scriptures in the Junior year, and those of the New Testament in the Senior year. It is not unlikely that within a short time the study will be extended to the two lower classes, probably as an elective for the Sophomores, and a required study for the Freshmen. Thus the course will be; Freshmen, Introductory Prolegomena; Answer to the queries, Whence is the Bible? How has it been transmitted to us? Sophomores, Biblical History: Juniors, Biblical Prophecy, and New Testament Epistles: Seniors, Critical Study of the Gospels."

Yale College has this present year moved in the direction which Professor Burroughs indicates. Professor Harper of Yale writes: "The work directly and indirectly relating to the Bible in Yale College is as follows:—firstly, an hour a week of required work with the entire Freshman class, in which there is given an outline of Egyptian History and Egyptology, Assyrian History and Assyriology as they stand related to the History of Israel, and also to classical History. This course consists of twenty-four lectures. With each lecture there is given a printed syllabus outlining the subject, and furnishing references for general reading. The lecture continues forty minutes, and the following week the class passes a twenty-minute written examination on the contents of the lecture. On each examination they are rigidly

marked. This work is done for the first time with the present Freshman class. Secondly, an elective offered to the members of the Senior and Junior classes. This elective is of a general character, and, for the present year, takes up the Early Hebrew History, Institutions, and Legal Literature. This course is given every third year, the others in the series taking up Old Testament Prophetic Literature, and Old Testament Wisdom Literature. Three years ago the class taking this work numbered twenty-three, two years ago thirty-four, last year forty-eight, the present year ninety-nine. Thirdly, a University Lecture is given once a week during fifteen weeks. Three years ago the subject was Old Testament History; two years ago it was a study of the Prophets in chronological order; last year a course was given on the Book of Psalms; the present year it takes up the Early Hebrew Traditions and Institutions. Fourthly, Bible Classes are organized in connection with the department for work on Sunday. Last year a class including two hundred and fifty to three hundred, for Freshmen and Sophomores, met Sunday at twelve o'clock and studied the Books of Samuel. Another class of one hundred to one hundred and fifty Seniors and Juniors met the same hour, with another instructor, in the study of the Life of the Christ. A third class, consisting of twenty-five to fifty graduate students, including law and medical students, met at four o'clock Sunday afternoon, with another instructor, for the study of Old Testament History."

There are in New England three colleges for women only. These are all of recent foundation, and have therefore had opportunity to avail themselves in their first organization of the interest and method of the new movement in Bible study. In these colleges the study is systematic, comprehensive, distributed throughout the course, and mainly required.

Smith College, ever since its foundation, has given to all students a course passing consecutively through the Books of the Bible, in the order of the English Version, so that, in the four years, the whole Bible is studied in each of its several parts. The study is mainly by lectures, one in each week in two out of the three terms of the year. President

Seelye says: "An effort has been made to give the students the results of modern scholarship and investigation, showing them the leading ideas of each book, and, as far as possible, the circumstances in which it was written."

Mt. Holyoke has but recently added a college department, and has extended to it the spirit and form of Bible study which has been heretofore a characteristic feature of the work of the Seminary. One hour a week throughout the course is given to the study of the Books of the Bible. The students are divided into several sections, under different members of the faculty, and the study is pursued by both teachers and pupils with no less zeal than is given to any other branch of learning. Quite frequently the interest is such that students desire to prolong the hour of recitation. Careful attention is given to recent publications in biblical literature, and the library is kept supplied with all new books of special value to Bible students.

Fifteen years ago systematic Bible study was introduced into Wellesley College. For a time a portion of the work was done on Sunday. Several years ago the two best hours in the week were set apart for it, with a marked improvement in both the intellectual and devotional quality of the work. The work has been from the first distributed among the teachers of the several departments of instruction. It was thought that such a division would make the influence of the Christian teachers more pervasive, and would provide also a stronger support for the Bible work, since a large number of teachers would become experimentally acquainted with its value. The Bible teachers are organized in four committees, and the chairmen of these committees constitute a superior committee. Under this committee system the work is laid out, and unified, while in the details each teacher pursues the method which best suits her individuality. While this system, which divides the work among instructors in other studies, instead of giving it to a single department, with a single head, is open to evident objection, in that the teachers cannot give it an undivided attention, and there is necessarily considerable diversity of adaptation and method, yet it has been found to have some special advantages. The teachers

have often chosen a field of Bible work which has some natural affiliation with their special department work, and which was therefore congenial, and tributary in fruitful suggestion to the ordinary secular study. The instructors have felt the stimulus of co-working in the same field, and have been enriched in their personal study and life by a more careful use of the "Bible library of reference," provided by a special fund, and kept up to the times, and by a deeper personal interest in the Bible lectures by specialists, which occupy a large place in the Bible work of each year. The chairman of the committee on Bible work in the College says: "Every teacher ought to have some line of study in which he is interested, aside from his special department work; that this has been Bible study for many of the faculty at Wellesley is a matter of self-congratulation, opening up, as it has, a myriad of fresh avenues of thought." The work, chosen, often according to personal taste and fitness by the most accomplished teachers, and pursued with increasing resources of information and experience, has had growth, variety, and a good degree of unity, while it has offered to the students the resources of a diversity of instructors, with varieties of adaptations among which there is opportunity for useful election. The Freshmen begin with a course in Christian Ethics, followed by Old Testament History from the Exodus to the Monarchy. The Sophomores continue Old Testament History to the Exile, studying each prophetic Book in its historical setting. The Juniors take up the Life of Christ, with an election of methods of study—using either the Greek, Latin, or English Gospels, or a course which lays special emphasis on Messianic Prophecy and its fulfilment. The Seniors study the Apostolic Church, with similar electives in method of treatment. The Junior and Senior electives in Method of Study are offered for the first time the present year. In addition to these prescribed studies, several electives are open to advanced pupils.

It appears that the new interest in Bible study, and the demand for increased academic opportunity to pursue it, is substantially a student movement, and that it has a strong root in college Young Men's Christian Association Bible

classes. It appears also that the desire of the students in this direction is meeting with a very general recognition and cordial response from the governing bodies. Further, it seems evident that this deepening interest and rising standard of college requirements in Bible study suggests and may ultimately require some such preparatory systematic study of Sacred History in the secondary schools as is already given to Greek and Roman History. Wellesley College has already made the attempt to promote such preparatory study by requiring an entrance examination upon Bible History, but found the secondary schools not yet ready for it, and was obliged to suspend the requirement. We know how fruitful in wide and important results the student movements towards Bible study have been in former times. The revivals of academic Bible study in the days of Wicliffe, Erasmus, Luther, Calvin, and the Wesleys have left their light upon the pages of universal history. With these historic illustrations before our eyes we may surely hope for much from the unparalleled student awakening of the present day—shared as it is by thousands of students, swelled from year to year by the evangelistic ardor of College Young Men's Christian Associations, deepened by the careful and systematic studies of the class room, dignified and strengthened by the cordial and comprehensive supervision of college and university corporations, diffused and popularized by home study and correspondence classes provided and cherished by great public educators. It does not require so much an eye of faith, as a mere glance along the lines of a normal historical development, to anticipate a great unfolding of blessing in near generations from the bountiful sowing of God's Word at the present time in the high places of popular influence.